



MEETING MINUTES
Local Roads & Streets Council
March 13, 2002
Wisconsin Rapids City Council Chambers
10:00 am to 2:30 pm

LRSC MEMBERS PRESENT

Wisconsin Counties Association

Phil Boehning—Clark County
Dick Leffler—Florence County
Emmer Shields—Ashland County
Tom Boguszewski—Rock County

Wisconsin Towns Association

Norm Faber – Ithaca
Eugene Lueck – Bloomer
Mildred Beier—Beaver Dam

League of Wisconsin Municipalities

Bill Handlos—Manitowoc
Dennis Melvin—West Bend

Wisconsin Alliance of Cities

Rick Jones—Racine
Chris Fornal (for Jeff Polenske) –Milw.
Bud Verjinsky—Wisconsin Rapids
Carl Weber—Green Bay

Regional Planning Commissions/

Metropolitan Planning Organizations

Walt Raith—Fox Cities and Oshkosh
Don Kush—Eau Claire

WisDOT STAFF PRESENT

Mary Forlenza
Rod Clark
Scott Bush
Bob Wagner – District 4
Ken Leonard
Doug Dalton
Joe Nestler
Carol Cutshall
Jon Novick

Others Present

Phil Scherer-TDA
Phil Barnes-FHWA
Dan Fedderly-St. Croix County

LRSC MEMBERS ABSENT

LaVerne Grunwald—Caledonia (Excused)
Dave Waffle-Reedsburg (Excused)
Gary Boden—Whitewater (Excused)
Ken Yunker—RPC/MPO

Opening Business (Rick Jones, Mary Forlenza)

Rick Jones called the meeting to order. Mary Forlenza took roll call. Minutes from the January 9, 2002 meeting were accepted as written. Mary discussed the belt tightening that is occurring at WisDOT given the state budget deficit. Additional measures recently

adopted include significantly reducing in-state travel expenses, approval by the Department of Administration for any out-of-state travel, approval by the WisDOT Secretary for any in-state travel, eliminating the hardcopy printing and postage for the council newsletter (transitioning to an electronic format only), and other operating budget cuts.

Rick asked if the council meetings should be scaled back to quarterly meetings. Walt questioned whether associations would be willing to sponsor the council.

Bill stressed that the council is focused on intergovernmental cooperation and the irony of scaling back the council's work given that coordination is a theme to alleviate the budget woes. Based on perceptions and not money, Bill said that he couldn't continue to participate in the council if per diem expenses are not reimbursed.

Don commented that scaling the council meetings back to quarterly would only reduce the amount of meetings by two per year and he didn't think this was going to save much money and the council could lose some momentum.

Rick summarized the discussion by saying that it is the consensus of the council to maintain the meeting schedule as-is. Bill added that meeting expenses are really a small item compared to the time taken for meetings and travel. Rod said that even though there are travel restrictions at the state level, it is important to get the right staff to meetings and continue to have worthwhile agendas. Rod indicated that there are funds available to continue to reimburse council members for food and travel expenses at least through June 2002.

LRSC in 2002 (Rick, Council)

2002 Priorities

The council reviewed the list of 2002 priorities that was refined at the Executive Committee meeting in February. This list includes:

Primary Issues:

- Council Relationship with WisDOT Secretary Kussart
- State Budget Crisis and Potential Impacts to Local Transportation Programs
- Federal Transportation Funding (Reauthorization, Rural Road Safety Program)
- Next Steps with WISLR/Update of the WisDOT Long Range Transportation Plan
- Environmental Regulatory Streamlining
- SCOP and Best Management Practices
- Trucks and Road Postings
- Conflicts of Use of Rights of Way

Secondary Issue:

- State-County Maintenance Contracts

Rick started the conversation by saying that he wants to talk with the WisDOT Secretary about the transfer of transportation funds to the general fund. Bud recommended that

weight enforcement be added to the priorities. Walt said that there was a WisDOT technical committee looking at this issue and wondered if it was impacted by budget cuts. Emmer offered that locals are losing the battle on enforcement with cutbacks in truck scales, nonexistent enforcement on local roads, and insufficient fine levels. Emmer and Walt agreed that overweight trucks are a serious problem but there is no public awareness of the issue. Emmer continued that overweight permits are handed out indiscriminately without recognizing the impacts to the pavement. He mentioned that WisDOT had a proposal to increase overweight fines but the Governor vetoed it. A motion to adopt the 2002 priorities for the council passed unanimously.

Meeting with Secretary Kussart

A meeting with the LRSC Executive Committee and WisDOT leadership has been scheduled for April 5th from 10:00 am to 11:30 am. Participants from the Secretary's office will include Secretary Gene Kussart, Deputy Secretary Pat Goss and Chief Operating Officer Tom Carlsen.

The council discussed potential agenda items for the meeting. The first item mentioned was on the state budget, specifically the transfer of transportation funds into the general fund. Committee members could provide local examples of budget reform impacts illustrating cuts in maintenance and improvement activities. Phil Scherer suggested that the meeting start on a positive note highlighting the charge and history of the council including coordination, cooperation and efficiency. Bill added that reminding the Secretary about the how the Kettl Commission cited the council, as a model of intergovernmental cooperation would be helpful. He also added that to counteract the enforcement costs, the truck weight limit discussion should focus on the long-term savings on pavement. Emmer also wants to follow up with the Secretary regarding the editorial he wrote on the budget reform bill. Rick said that a borrowing exemption in the budget bill could shift financing practices. The school spending cap exemption encouraged some school districts to borrow instead of fund activities out of their operating budget and this shift increased costs.

Phil Scherer recommended that the committee put the positives on the pavement rating submittal process up front in the discussion and compliment the department on their support. Phil Scherer stated that this data will be invaluable for monitoring and managing the local road system. Walt added that the requirement was easily justifiable. Dan Fedderly told the council that the pavement rating requirement was number two on a list of state mandates developed for the Legislative Day put on by the Wisconsin Towns Association. Bill said that it appeared on the list because it was a recent activity and that more complex issues such as the proposed storm water rule will have a much greater impact on locals but are not easily understood. Dan added that some towns spent \$2000 for a consultant to rate their roads. Walt said that regional planning commissions and other agencies provided this service free of charge and that towns that spent money didn't take the time to look for help. Scott said that he was aware of consultants who were overstating the requirement in an effort to get work with local communities. Based on conversations with town officials, he was told that the effort was minimal and took most towns about two days to rate their roads and a couple of hours to enter in the data into a spreadsheet.

Norm said that he had not heard any complaints from towns on costs for the pavement ratings. Rod suggested that council members talk with their associations to provide a balanced perspective on this issue. Eugene added that there were no impacts on the rating requirement in his town since they have been evaluating their roads all along. Millie said that pavement ratings shouldn't be number two on this list and that the requirement was a good thing. Rick added that it was just bad timing on the development of the mandate list since the pavement ratings are fresh in people's minds. Dennis said that State Representative Scott Jensen and State Senator Mary Panzer recently asked for a list of mandates and that the council shouldn't be surprised if the pavement ratings end up on another list.

Moving on to other items to discuss with Secretary Kussart, Tom mentioned that the Local Financing Study Group issues should be reviewed. He added that incentives to the General Transportation Aids program could be developed to encourage intergovernmental coordination. The recent efforts on environmental streamlining were also added to the list. A conference call was scheduled with the Executive Committee to prioritize these items and flesh out each topic.

Federal Issues

TDA Fly-In Recap

Phil Scherer reviewed a successful Fly-In held February 11 and 12 in Washington, D.C. He stressed that the event provides long-term benefits through sharing information and building a rapport with legislators. Phil handed out a summary of issues (attached) discussed at the Fly-In.

Reauthorization

Beth Nachreiner, Legislative Liaison with WisDOT, plans to attend the May, and 2002 council meeting to update the group on reauthorization issues. Mary indicated that WisDOT's next Stakeholders Meeting is still planned for June to review progress on reauthorization. The department is trying to get congressional members/staff and stakeholders participating in national forums such as Tom Walker, Executive Director of WTBA (ARTBA's reauthorization committee), and Jean Jacobsen, Racine County Executive (NAACO's reauthorization group) to provide a national perspective on issues.

Ken Leonard is working with AASHTO on reauthorization efforts. A meeting will be held in April with state officials from across the nation to draft policy proposals and talk with interest groups. To date there has been no indication about the administration's proposal and the U.S. DOT proposal should come out this spring. Wisconsin may support continuation of RABA and firewalls in the transportation fund and will analyze the impact of alternate fuels on the highway trust fund. The state wants to increase transportation revenues first and then develop a strategy to allocate the additional funds to various interests. Rod added that the 2003 appropriations bill sets the stage for the reauthorization discussions.

WisDOT Long Range Transportation Plan (Ken Leonard)

Ken provided the council with a presentation (attached) on updating TransLinks21, the long-range transportation plan for WisDOT. Ken mentioned that the plan would include needs-based Local Road and Transit elements for the first time. He suggested that the department actively utilize the council to solicit comment during the plan's development.

Walt asked if the plan would be financially constrained. Ken responded that the planning process would look at needs, prioritize how to finance them, and then determine if additional funding levels or funding sources are required. Walt said that in the past rural highways haven't been a priority compared with the backbone system. Ken indicated that the higher functioning system will continue to be a priority in the planning process, but the plan will evaluate needs on the lower order systems also.

Bill commented that planning should determine the initial needs and that politics should be a separate process. Don said that the plan shouldn't be a wish list but should emphasize needs over constraints. Ken mentioned that the State Highway Plan was not developed as a wish list and the Local Road Element should be developed with a list of rational and prioritized needs. Phil Scherer stressed that funding should be a focus of the plan and that economic assumptions should be flexible given the 25 year planning horizon.

Emmer said that the department should first decide what is a preferred level of performance before needs could be established. He said that the department should gain local consensus on a standard before identifying funding needs. Emmer added that local input will be crucial since surface types and performance levels vary throughout the state. Other issues that can be addressed in the plan include establishing a balance between modes and identifying state and local roles for financing transportation facilities.

Rod commented that structural changes recommended by the Kettl Commission shift governmental responsibilities. Ken indicated that local assistance would be required if the plan would realign local-state and local-local roles identified by the Kettl Commission. Chris mentioned that it might be a good opportunity to look at a metropolitan form of government given the revamping proposals underway in Milwaukee County.

Walt said he was pleased that a Local Road Element will be developed as part of the long range plan update given that the local road network comprises 100,000 miles of the 112,000 mile system in the state. Ken requested the council work with WisDOT as the plan is developed and to remember that it will be an evolving process.

Phil Scherer asked if the plan recommendations would be plugged into the 2003-2005 state biennial budget. Ken said that the plan will not be far enough along to assist in the 2003-05 budget process but noted that pavement data provided by WISLR might assist in this effort. Emmer asked how the environmental justice regulations would be addressed in the plan. Phil Barnes said that a plan should address the regulations on both a statewide and a project level basis. Several council members added that the plan should identify the impacts of overweight trucks on the local system and could develop policies addressing

this issue. Ken stressed that the plan will be focused on asset management but that it is not an allocation plan to distribute costs to various users.

Ken said that the project schedule provides for analysis to be completed by July 2004 to link to the 2005-2007 biennial budget process, and to actually complete the plan by the end of 2004. Mary reiterated that the council can play an active role in the development of the Local Road Element. Ken introduced Doug Dalton, Chief of the Urban Planning Section at WisDOT. Doug will be heading up the team to work on the plan. Doug's area will be working on the plan with local communities, the council, the Bureau of Transit and Local Roads, WisDOT district offices, regional planning commissions and metropolitan planning organizations.

WISLR Status Report & Phase II Update (Joe Nestler)

Joe provided the council with a presentation (attached) on the Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads (WISLR). Bill asked if WISLR users will see historical information on maintenance and improvement activities. Joe said that WISLR will not store this information. Bill said that in his case the city will continue to maintain these records separately from WISLR, but it would be great if the system could keep this information. In response to a question from Walt, Joe clarified that WISLR does provide the ability to map physical attributes other than pavement ratings.

Joe noted that many discrepancies between road names have been identified through creating the WISLR base map and the pavement rating submittal process. Walt said that new discrepancies were found by looking at the CVT maps side by side with the certified mileage statements. Bill asked if the City of Milwaukee's pavement evaluation system was acceptable to WisDOT. Joe said that Milwaukee's system is appropriate but WisDOT did have to reject some systems based on insufficient logic in the rating structure. Bill recommended that pavement rating data be analyzed across time to understand trends. Phil Scherer added that the five year projection of road needs that will be developed in the long-range plan will help identify if conditions are improving or eroding.

Rick asked how WisDOT will determine the level of local investments to factor into the needs calculations. Scott commented that the data that local communities provide to the Department of Revenue each year in the expenditure reports are too generalized to be helpful. WisDOT may need to sample specific expenditure data from some communities and project this information statewide. Walt added that the RPC has done some sampling on transportation investments and will provide this data to WisDOT.

In response to a question by Eugene, Joe said that the system will be launched in August 2002 and locals can view their data at this time. Training will be offered in the fall or winter and will be required before local communities are allowed to update their data in the system. Bill asked Joe to come back to a future council meeting to show a live demonstration of the system.

Mary acknowledged the hard work that Joe and his staff have done on WISLR. Don asked Joe what the workload will be to load and verify the pavement data. Joe did not yet have an accurate estimate but acknowledged that significant time will be required to resolve route name discrepancies. Bill said that in reality the route name discrepancies do not negatively impact the accuracy of the base map but the real issue is credibility perceptions from viewers. Joe added that WISLR is looking into the possibility of enabling other local road data items to be updated in WISLR through future *Paserware* functionality.

Rick stated that WISLR and the pavement rating submittals are models for state-local partnerships and he asked how the council could raise these to legislators as success stories. Bill said that a newsletter could be developed and shared with legislators. Scott said that the local response to the pavement rating requirement is the lead story in the spring 2002 council newsletter and will be sent to the legislature. Rick said that would suffice in the short term but that open houses could be developed where legislators are invited to view the system and talk with local officials about the importance of the system. He said that WISLR is the antithesis of the general public's opinion about local communities not working together and with the state.

Joe said that the success of WISLR has been, and will be, because of intergovernmental cooperation. He added that the success of the pavement rating submittals was due in large part to the advocacy council members provided to their peers and to the outstanding efforts of WisDOT staff in handling over 1,500 phone contacts from locals related to pavement rating submittals. Mary recommended that these issues be mentioned at the meeting with Secretary Kussart. Rick added that this is an opportunity to sell the next project. Joe said that he envisions a ten year education process on WISLR since the majority of users are not as sophisticated as most council members.

Rod reminded the council that there are no funding commitments for additional development beyond this fall 2002 launch of WISLR. The LRSC needs to identify additional functions to develop in the next phase of WISLR since it has not been conceptualized nor funded at this point. Bill agreed that this should be done soon so that existing staff and their project knowledge don't leave the department; Joe recognized that staff & project knowledge is a valid concern. Joe added that maintenance funds also need to be obtained for WISLR.

Environmental Streamlining Update

There will be a small group discussion on environmental streamlining at 2:45 pm today. A summary of the meeting will be provided to the council at the May meeting.

Closing Business & Adjourn

Discussion provided the following items for the May agenda:

- Reauthorization with Beth Nachreiner
- Environmental streamlining
- LRSC website
- Review of discussion with Secretary Kussart
- LRSC biennial report

Potential items for July include a live demo and update on WISLR by Joe Nestler and a discussion on use conflicts in rights of way.

Mary and Rick reminded the council that Mayor Bud Verjinsky is sitting in his last council meeting since he is not running for re-election and she applauded Bud for his long time contributions to the council.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:30 p.m.